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Col. Thomas Gilbert,

The Leader of New England Tories.

— BY —

JOHN C. CRANE.

Resident member New England Historic Genealogical Society.

WORCESTER, MASS.  
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1893.

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THOMAS GILBERT:

BORN - - - - - 1715,

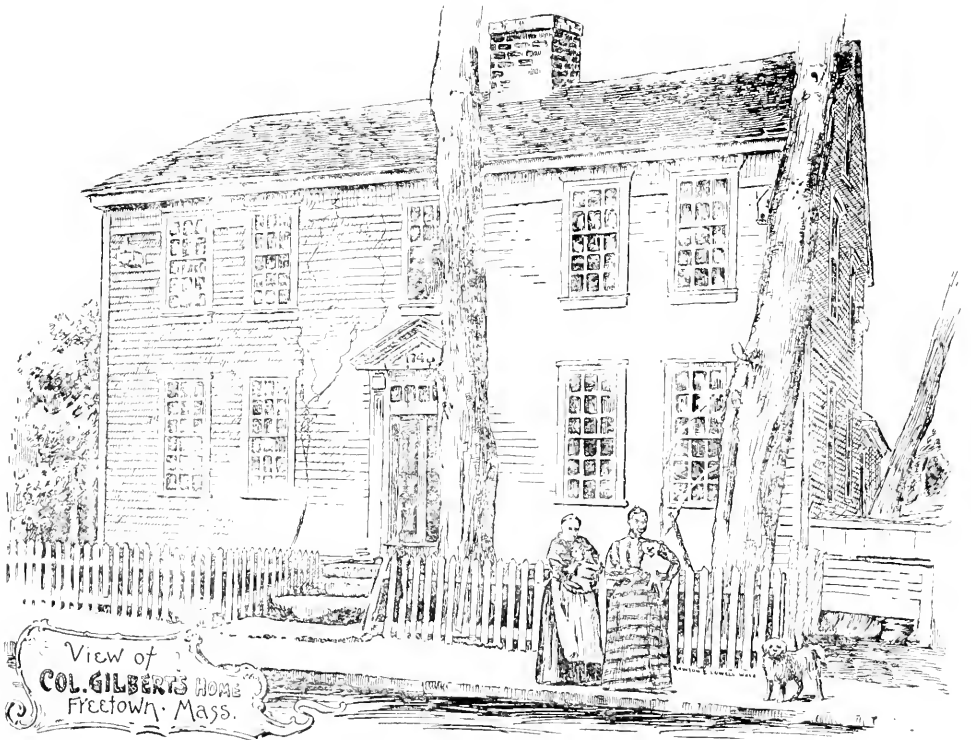
DIED - - - - - 1797.

LOUISBURG, CROWN POINT,  
LAKE GEORGE.

57 12.16.10.

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THE NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY.







**A**T a stated meeting of THE NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, held at the Hall of Boston University, 12 Somerset Street, Wednesday, Oct. 5, 1892, at 3 o'clock P. M., Ex-Governor William Claflin, the President, in the chair, John C. Crane of Millbury, Mass., spoke as follows:—

Mr. President and Gentlemen of THE NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY: I fully appreciate the honor conferred upon me by the invitation to read the following paper on

# Col. Thomas Gilbert,

The Leader of New England Tories.

John Gilbert from whom the subject of this sketch descended was born in Devonshire, England. The year in which he came to this country is unknown, Hotton making no mention of him, although many Gilberts appear in his book of arrivals. Mr. Sabine thinks him to have been well along in years at the time of his coming, and that Dorchester, Mass. was his first place of residence. This much we do know, that he was here previous to 1636, and was known to be dead in 1654, his widow being then alive. John Gilbert and Henry Andrews had the honor of being the first two men to represent Taunton, Mass. at the Great and General Court.

Among the list of first and ancient purchasers of land at Taunton we find the names of John Gilbert, Senior, his sons John and Thomas with forty three others, including that of Hugh Rossiter, whose daughter, Thomas, the son of John Senior, married. Governor Winthrop in his history gives quite an account of the escapade of this Thomas at Boston, whereat the Puritan Fathers of that city were greatly shocked. But he seems to have outlived whatever disgrace may have come to him in consequence, for we find he was afterward elected to the General Court from Taunton in 1651. In 1653 he went to England, where he died in 1676. Jane, his wife, remained at Taunton where she received the news of his death.

Col. Thomas Gilbert of this family, son of Nathaniel, was born in what is now Berkley Bristol County, Mass. in 1715. A large part of the of the early settlers of Taunton being natives of Devonshire and Somersetshire England, and many coming from Taunton in the mother country; it is fair to presume was the reason the Gilberts chose this town as their place of settlement in the new world. Col. Gilbert on his mothers side was a descendent of William Bradford, Plymouth Colony's second Governor.

As a Captain under Sir William Pepperell, he fought at the famous siege of Louisburg in 1745. His next military duty was in the French war in 1755, under Brig. Gen. Ruggles. Thus early in in the history of the country, Ruggles and Gilbert cemented their friendship on the field of battle, which relation did not end until Gilbert became the leader and both found graves in the soil of New Scotland the French Arcadia.

Col. Gilbert was with the Victorious forces that took possession of Crown Point after General Amherst had subdued Ticonderoga. At Lake George, Baron Dieskau led the French army against the English forces. Col. Ephraim Williams, who commanded the regiment of which Gilbert was Lieutenant Colonel, was slain and the latter became its commanding officer.

The conquest of Canada ended in 1763. Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, Canada and all the Islands in the gulf and river St. Lawrence passed from French to

English hands. Colonel Gilbert and his men sought their respective homes and we learn but little of him until a year or so, previous to the battle of Lexington. In 1773, he has known to have been a Colonel doing military duty. He was also a magistrate, justice of the quorum. As a representative he occupied a seat in the General Court of the Colony, Freetown, Massachusetts, being his home. The office of sheriff had been tendered him by the English authorities. It was the wish of the people of Bristol county, that he should refuse to act in that capacity under the laws then in force. Threats were made as to what would follow if he disregarded their expressed opinion. It would seem his action was such as was not in accordance with their desire for at Dartmouth an attempt was made later, to secure the person of the unflinching loyalist. By the aid of Gilbert's friends this purpose was thwarted, but the sons of liberty in the county of Bristol, neither slumbered nor slept.

The English rulers at Boston, watched with keen eyes the progress of events in that city and elsewhere. The tory sympathizers in every town, reported all acts looking like treason to George the Third. General Gage was bent on keeping the colonists in subjection; knowing of the valuable service previously rendered by Gilbert to the King and his cause in the French war, he requested him to rally the tories of New England and form regiments to overawe the rebellious subjects of England. Three hundred answered the call in Bristol County and the old veteran who had helped conquer France in the new world assumed command.

The open defiance of Col. Gilbert to the patriotic cause, filled the people with indignation. The uprising in the region where he lived became so great and threats of vengeance so loud against him and his followers, he began to make sure of his lines of retreat, if worse came to worst for him and his loyal legions. He sought the aid of Commander Wallace, then in charge of His Majesty's Ship Rose, at Newport, R. I. A letter was written to that officer which fell into the hands of his enemies, the patriots. Indignation against Gilbert rose to fever heat. Just before the battle of Lexington the patriots in Assembly anathematized the acknowledged leader of the New England Tories, as follows: "Col. Thomas Gilbert is an inveterate enemy to his country, to reason, to justice and the common rights of mankind. Whoever has knowingly espoused his cause or taken up arms for its support, does in common with himself, deserve to be instantly cut off from the benefit of commerce with, or countenance of any friend of virtue, America or the human race." That he was the recognized leader of the tory party is evident from the fact of his being styled by the patriots in Assembly, "Gilbert and his Banditti." "Tory Gilbert," was a household term in those days and which passed from lip to lip among the patriots of New England and by their descendents has been handed down to us.

Colonel Gilbert realized his danger. He felt the storm gathering over his head would soon burst in all its fury—with the eye of an experienced soldier, he saw discretion was the better part of valor. His King had need of him and he fled. He made his way to Newport, and went on board the Rose, whose commander received him with open arms. From there he proceeded to Boston, from which place under date of May 4th 1775, a letter was written to his sons at Freetown and Berkley, urging them to meet him at Boston.

The battle of Lexington had been fought, the martyrs of liberty had passed over the river of death, but the end was not yet. Percy and his fleeing Britons

had fared hard on their way back to the Tri-mountain city. The fires of patriotism burned bright on many hill-tops in the old Bay State. The heights of Bunker showed its brightest green in the morning sunlight, soon to be wet with the life blood of New England's best and bravest sons. The tory leader, Gilbert, was an honored guest with his English friends at Boston. His forces were scattered here and there over New England. His emissaries passed back and forth between Worcester and other points. The committees of safety were busy in many towns, weeding out those who did his bidding. Many were proscribed and banished. Some confessed their error and made promise of amendment, in many cases only to be broken as opportunity offered to aid the royal cause. "Old Sutton as long as eternity," had blasted forever the hopes of "Gilbert's Banditti" on Worcester Common, in 1774, and soon after John Murray, Gilbert's lieutenant on Rutland hill, heard the tramp of patriot feet hastening to his door. The right hand man and bosom friend of the tory chieftain, Ruggles of Hardwick, brave in the face of what seemed certain death, passed forever from the soil he loved so well. Consternation lit among the tory camps as their leaders fled from them. The list of those fleeing loyalists who left friends and property behind is well filled. In it will be found the names of men eminent in the higher walks of life. Worcester and Worcester County had her share of such, including the Chandlers, Pains and others, who felt it to be their duty to stand for King George and the government of England.

In the month of March, 1776, Dorchester heights had been taken and occupied by the patriots. In consequence of this action, the English Admiral feared for the safety of his vessels in and about Boston. To Lord Wm. Howe, the successor of General Gage, he communicated the unwelcome news when it was determined to evacuate. On the 17th of the same month the English troops boarded the fleet and sailed for Halifax. With him went the tory leader Gilbert. It was not until 1778, that he was proscribed and banished in form. During the Revolution he remained connected with the English army, probably most of the time in the vicinity of Nova Scotia, though what expeditions he went in the service of his king is unknown, but the earnestness he had previously shown in the cause of England, leads us to believe he was not inactive throughout the remainder of the contest. He is reported to have been at Conway, in the county of Annapolis, Nova Scotia, bordering on the Bay of Funday, the 16th of November 1783. He had previously petitioned the English authorities for a grant of land. From the letter of Mary Gilbert, his wife, which follows later, we find his whereabouts in 1784, and also learn the length of time he had been there.

That his claim on England was recognized, is fully shown by letters and documents that follow. His final home was on the river St. John, New Brunswick, which rises in a lake of the same name in Maine, and after a journey of 450 miles empties itself into the Bay of Funday, which separates New Brunswick from Nova Scotia. His possessions received from the King were mostly in Sunbury and Queens Counties.

The province of New Brunswick was taken from Nova Scotia in 1784 the same year the letter of his wife Mary, was written to Ephraim Winslow, from Gilbert's point, St. Mary's Bay. It is left on record that at the ending of the French War in which Gilbert took prominent part, he refused to retire on half pay, which he was entitled to do. His services in behalf of England, during the

Revolutionary war, brought him a handsome reward from the King, although during that period he held no written commission. As a loyalist he met with severe losses of property in Massachusetts which were more than made up to him by the mother country. In a letter which appears further on in this sketch, from Deborah Gilbert, his daughter, the time place and manner of his death is fully given. The following letter explains itself:—

" Berkley, Mass., Oct. 6, 1890.

John C. Crane,  
West Millbury Mass.

Dec. 13, 1759, Lemuel Crane and Bathsheba Gilbert, both of Berkley, were joined in marriage by Thomas Gilbert, Justice of peace. The house in which they lived is now occupied by the Town Clerk of Berkley.

Yours,

F. M. DEAN,  
For H. DEAN, TOWN CLERK."

By this marriage Bathsheba Gilbert, became my great grandmother, her husband being my great-grandfather, the fourth generation removed from Henry Crane of Dorchester, Massachusetts, known to have been there in 1654, and from whom I am descended.

As above shown, Col. Gilbert had himself married his second daughter to Mr. Crane. The latter was also a loyalist and at the begining of the Revolution took sides with George the Third. The records of Berkley show that in the early part of the struggle he was " Proscribed as mimical to the country." To avoid leaving it, he was forced to make a confession and promise of amendment. The same was accepted and placed on the town books. In his acknowledgement he claims to have been " Disabled " in his feet or legs, yet he is known to have served when one or two special calls were made on the militia for patriot service, though no doubt much against his will.\*

Lemuel Crane Esq., was a farmer and also a lawyer at Berkley. Notwithstanding the promise of amendment he had made, for some reason, the patriots of that town and region about, were dissatisfied with him. Sometime previous to the year 1779, as he was one day drawing a seine in Taunton River, the sons of liberty descended on him and he was taken just as he was (but not stripped) tarred and feathered and lodged in Taunton jail.† There he remained a short time when he was liberated. In consequence of this action of his patriotic neighbors, he determined on leaving the scene of his troubles.

In the winter of 1779, he went on horseback to Partridgefield, (now Pern Mass.,) thinking there to locate. Not liking he went to Oxford, where he found congenial spirits and tory sympathizers, among whom is said to have been a captain Learned. He purchased the farm on Federal Hill, now owned by Miss Lucy A. Pratt, a great granddaughter, the homestead having been willed to her by Bradford G. Edson, a grandson of Mr. Crane. This farm was then owned by Darius Chase, who had formerly lived at Berkley.

Mr. Crane leaving his horse at Oxford, (owing to the great depth of snow) proceeded on foot wearing snowshoes, to his home at Berkley. In 1780, he sold his farm there, 130 acres more or less, to Ebinezar Dean, for \$3000.00 and removed to Oxford taking with him his ten children. At the time Col. Gilbert was on board the ship Rose at Newport, his son-in-law Lemuel Crane paid him

\* The old powder-horn used by Mr. Crane and bearing a date long before the Revolution, is now in possession of his great-granddaughter, Miss Laura D. Stoekwell, of Oxford, Massachusetts.

† After removing to Oxford Mass., he is known to have shown his cat still bearing the tar and feathers, to the Chandlers, Paines and other tory sympathizers at Worcester.

a visit. On the latter's return to Berkley, he brought from the vessel tea and beans. Some of the latter were in 1780, planted at Oxford, and every year since beans have been raised on the Crane farm there, from seed thus procured.

It appears from letters received by the Gilberts while in exile at New Brunswick, that Lemuel Crane, Thomas Hathaway and Ephraim Winslow, all sons-in-law (the two latter from the region of Berkley as was Mr. Crane, \*originally) had visited them there. We should also infer from the contents of the letters that many friends and sympathisers from Taunton, Berkley, Freetown and other places, had also sought the protection of King George in that region.

Brigadeer Gen. Ruggles, of Hardwick, Col. John Murray of Rutland, both mandamus councillors, also found a refuge with their tory leader, in the region known altogether as Nova Scotia, until 1784.

Of the sons of Col. Gilbert, we learn they were all in sympathy with him and followed after to the British possessions. Captain Samuel Gilbert of Berkley, Mass., was the one mentioned in the letter of Mary Gilbert, dated Nov. 1, 1784. He followed the fortunes of his brother, Col. Thomas, sailing with him to Halifax, in 1776, leaving his family behind. He was proscribed as the others were in 1778. He remained in New Brunswick until after the close of the Revolution, when he returned to Berkley. The following letters and documents, including a copy of the will of Col. Gilbert, in his own hand writing have laid with their contents unknown to this generation. They give a history of the life of Col. Gilbert and family, after his settlement on the river St. John, New Brunswick. By them we take up the broken threads in the affairs of the great tory leader, and the later life of himself and family stands revealed. In a historical point of view they are exceedingly valuable. It is a wonder that they have escaped destruction in the years gone by. It is a satisfaction to lay before the public these papers relating to one of my ancestors.

[Letter of Mary Gilbert, wife of Col. Gilbert.]

GILBERT'S POINT, ST. MARY'S BAY, NOV. 1, 1784,

DEAR CHILDREN:—

I take this opportunity to let you know that your Father and I are well and have been, ever since we have Lived in this healthy Province.

Our situation is good and your Father is well pleased with the goodness of the land, and the multitude of all sorts of Fish and fowl that inhabit here. My sons Thomas and Peres live very nigh to us and have been closely engaged in Building a Saw mill for this two months, but have now got it completed.

I wish that you or my son Crane, would come and see this fine country. We have been here one year.

Everything grows well, we have a small stock of Cattle, Eight cows, Four oxen, Six Horses and some young mares and make Hay enough for them. Capt. Sam'l Gilbert is well and now lives with us and wishes to be remembered to his Loving wife and family. Bradford lives at St. Johns, and

Henry Tisdales \* \* \* \* Ephr'm Tisdale and family are well. Eben'zr Hathaway lives at the head of the Bay of Funday all well. Welthy Ruggles \* \* \* \* are all well and prosper.

All our friends from Freetown are well. I must conclude with Remembering my love and tender affection to all my children, all my Brothers and Sisters and their famlies. (Captain Jale Hathaway, Capt'n Brightman, Mr Nicolls, Hathaway and their families, Capt'n Canay, Mr. Abner—and their familys, Graney—Job Anthony and all friends) was I as young as you I would not trouble myself to send love but would go and carry it. I hope to see Some of you next Summer if God spares

\*[ From Massachusetts Spy, Oct. 5, 1814.]

" Died in Oxford, very suddenly, Mr. Lemuel Crane in the 78th year of his age."

our lives, but if it be otherwise ordered by ye Governor of all Flesh, I hope to meet you in Heaven where I hope to rest. To Eph'm Winslow (my love to Patt) Mary Gilbert.

[Letter of Thomas Gilbert Jr.]

GILBERTS POINT ST. MARY'S BAY, NOV. 2, 1784.

\*Patt. I take this opportunity to let you know where I live and the situation of this Place. I have a fine Neck of Land of Six Hundred acres Given to me by the King. I think it the best Land and lies the most comodiously to make a fine Farm that I ever see in my life. Fish and fowl of all sorts, Salt meadows enough and Pasture, already cleared to my hand. I have made plenty of Butter and Cheese. On the Creek and Stream I found Lumber sufficient for a Vessel of two Hundred Tons Burden. Brother Peres Lot joins to mine and we have built a fine sawmill on a good stream, where we have Plenty of Timber. Your old Master and Mistress live on the other side comfortably and agreeably seated and in Good health. Deborah Lives them. my four sons which my wife bore unto me in the Land of Berkley, are well and grown very stout.

Perhaps you or some others may think odd that I Direct this letter to you, but, the reason why I do it is, because I have been out of the sight of my Brothers and Sisters and old acquaintances almost ten years. During that time I have wrote two letters to my Sister Hathaway in her lifetime, two to Brother and Sister Crane, three to brother and Sister Winslow, one to mother Evens, one to Sam'l Godfrey, all—This is all there is left of the letter, but the letters refered to above had probably remained unanswered. There are some figures on the back of the epistle, and the name Samuel Davis 2 acres appears.)

That Col. Gilbert was in a state of uncertainty as to property left behind in Massachusetts, is shown by what appears in the following deed made by himself.

Know all men by these presents that I Thomas Gilbert of Gagetown, in Queens County and province of New Brunswick Esq., for and in consideration of the love, good will and natural affection which I have and do bare to my loving Daughter, Bathsheba Crane, (the lawful wife of Lemuel Crane, of oxford in the county of Worcester, in the commonwealth of Massachusetts Bay, Gentleman,) and many other causes and considerations, me thereunto moving, have given, granted, conveyed and by these presents do convey and forever quit claim and confirm to her the said Bathsheba Crane, her heirs and assigns forever, All my right, title and interest, which I have, *or of right ought to have* in and to sundry lots of cedar swamp, which layeth in Taunton in the county of Bristol in said commonwealth, together with that part of said Swamp, belonging to me, which is known and distinguished and commonly called the burnt ground. I also give grant and convey to my said daughter my purchase rights, which I have in said Taunton propriety, with all the undivided and Sequestered lands, to said rights belonging, the rights and lands given and granted as above described, was given and conveyed to me by the last will and testament of my honored father Nathaniel Gilbert, late of Berkley in ye county aforesaid, Gentleman, Deceased, referance to said will being had for the proof of the said Bequest.

To have and to hold the above, given and granted and conveyed premises, with all the priviledges and appurtenances to the same belougings or in any way appertaining, to her the said Bathsheba Crane, her heirs and assigns forever, in witness wheroff the said Thomas Gilbert, hath hereunto set his hand and seal the Seventeenth Day of August in ye thirty third year of his Majestys Reign A. D. 1793.

THOMAS GILBERT.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in presence of us:

THOMAS GILBERT JUNIOR,

PERES GILBERT.

The following appears on the outside of this Deed: Col. Gilbert's Deed of Gift to his Daughter Crane.

Recorded—paid 2 shillings 6 pences, and these names Thomas Gilbert, James Worts and John Gingsals; also something about their rights.

QUEENS COUNTY, S. S. AUG. 20, 1793.

Then appeared Thomas Gilbert Esq., subscriber to the within written instrument and acknowledged the same to be his act and Deed, before me—Zebulon Esty,

JUSTICE PEACE.

BRISTOL, S. S. OCT. 9th 1793.

\*Patt was formerly a female slave of Col. Gilbert in Massachusetts.

Then received their Deed and Recorded the same in Book 72 Folio 202.

ATTEST JAMES WILLIAMS, REGISTER.

There is also this statement: This land contained in this Deed Sold to Robert and Nathaniel Britain.

[Letter from Col. Gilbert addressed to Mr. Ephm Gilbert Edson, a youth of Bridgewater, New England.]

Favored by Mr. Winslow. GAGETOWN, PROVINCE OF NEW BUNSWICK, 25 JULY, 1795.

My dear Great Grandson. I received your loving letter some years past (which I soon answered) now having a favorable opportunity to inform you I with your great grandmother and your uncles & aunts are in health and join in our love to your Father, Mother, Sister & all our friends &c.

Your uncle Winslow is here and Will be the bearer of these lines, with a small present, a pair of small Gold Sleeve buttons,\* by which, I hope and pray you may remember you had such a Grandfather many years after I shall be here no more, but in another and a better country which I believe is not this side Heaven, where if we live here as we ought to do, fearing God, and keeping his commandments, we shall assuredly meet and rejoice together in that God, who is the author of our being and through Jesus Christ, hath redeemed us to eternal salvation.

Youthful days, tho days of vanity, are the best and surest days to prepare for Eternity which God Grant you may improve this early part of your time, as may all your youthful relations and others to that great end, is the sincere wish and humble prayers of your Great Grandfather

THOMAS GILBERT,

in the Eighty first year of his age. Ephraim Gilbert Edson.

[Letter of Lucretia Gilbert, wife of Peres Gilbert.]

GAGETOWN (NEW BRUNSWICK) the 29, 1799.

DEAR SISTER:—

I cannot neglect so good an opportunity as this By Mr. Hathaway. Forget you I never shall 'till Death for the kindness received from you when from home. It makes me thankful with a grateful heart. Presume you have heard of the Death of your father. Mother is as well as she has been for some years. She has been 3 times to our neighbors this summer. Your brother is as well as I could expect to see him, for he works himself almost to Death, and it is not in the power of friends or foes to persuade him from it, though he has but one child in the world, so I think it matters not whether we have a great share of this worlds goods or not. But we are of that uneasy make, that we are never enjoying this life. We should be pleased to see you or any of your family. Your brother sends his love to you and your family.

LUCRETIA GILBERT.

Pray write to me by the first opportunity. Remember me to Mr. Crane. Mrs. Bathsheba Crane  
By Mr. Hathaway.

[2d Letter of Thomas Gilbert Jr.]

On Board Major's Island.

(NEW BRUNSWICK) SEPT'R 30, 1799.

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER:—

Mr. Hathaway, will wait on you with these lines, wherein you will be informed of the Death of our Hon'd Father, which I beleive you have heard before this. Our Mother is well and hearty considering her age. Deborah Lives with her at Brother Peres, and they are blest with plenty. Since you was here, I have made Great improvements on board of this Island. Three summers ago, I built a Large House, the Carpenter just as he had finished the work, took a brand of fire by accident, and burnt it all to ashes with three Hundred Pounds Property in it. It happened the 15th of Nov'r. winter set in next day. I fled to a small House I had on the Island. Ice making in the River that there was no passing, but my Neighbors knew my situation and assembled of their own good will—in four weeks put me into a good Framed House forty feet long twenty wide, with a good chimney, where I lived the Winter very comfortably. In the spring, I went to work and built a House 38 by 36 and set it on to the other which occupies the same Ground that the other did, and I finished it to a latch from top to bottom. The same Summer I built a Barn on the four lots 42 by 32. The summer past I have built me a Barn 80 feet by 34 completely finished, and said to be the best in the Province. I wonder you Dont come yourself or send some of your Family to help us enjoy this fine country. we feel no war nor pay any Tax. Our land brings fourth abundantly, it is almost incredible to see the Produce, it makes but little odds when you plant or

\* These sleeve-buttons still remain in the family and are made of Spanish Gold Coin.



sow—at harvest time you will have plenty—this last spring was late, the water was not off so that I could plant 'till the 21st of June—and so 'till 26 we planted and you never see so much corn in any part of the States to the acre, as I have got, and wheat and everything to the Greatest Perfection. I wonder how you and my Friends can Prefer, Digging among the Stones and Paying Rates to an easy life in this country. Last year I sold Beef Pork and Mutton more than I wanted for my family, for three Hundred Pounds, besides two colts for forty Pounds a piece—a few days ago, I sold four colts before they were broke, for one Hundred and ten pounds and I have sixteen left. I have a fine stock of cattle and sheep—butter and cheese is as plenty here as herrings are at Taunton—a tenant lives better here than a Landlord at Berkley. I am blest with the best Neighbors that ever Drew breath—they are made out of the same stuff that our fore Fathers were, that first settled New England. (You must let me brag a little and no harm as its true) I have been unfortunate with my children. I have lost almost all of them. Samuel had a liking for the Sea, he left me Six years ago, I have heard of him several times that he was master of a ship and was doing well—but now alas I hear that he is taken by the French and carried I know not where.

Nath'l and Humphrey live with me and are two Stout young men—and take good care how they conduct—my wife is hearty and well, and is a good nurse to me in my old age. Our Father in his last will gave to the heirs of Sister Molly, One Hundred Pounds, to be Divided Equally or to the surviving ones. I wish if you had a chance to let them know, they may have it by sending, but I had rather they would come. Sister Crane and Sister Winslow five Pounds each. Pray come yourself or send some of your children. I live under the Protection of the King, and I am stationed by his Laws on this Island, the finest farm in the Province. I dont intend to weigh my anchor nor start from this, 'till I have orders from the Governor of all things—then I hope to obey the summons with joy and gladness—with Great Expectation, to meet you in Heaven Where I hope to rest.

My Wife and sons Join with my love to you and all friends. I am your loving Brother,

L. & B. Crane.

THOMAS GILBERT.

Outside of letter addressed Lemuel Crane,

Oxford,

New England.

Pr Mr. Hathaway.

[Letter of Deborah Gilbert Daughter of Col. Gilbert—Giving account of his death ]

GRIMOS (NEW BRUNSWICK) OCTOBER 1, 1799.

DEAR BROTHER & SISTER:—

How Do you Do—how have you Done for this six years past. Your father is gone, he Departed this life the first day of July of a Saturday night about twelve o'clock in the year 1797, after four months illness—But his complaint was in his head, sick at his stomach—he took a very bad cold no doubt he seemed to be willing to die—he thought he had lived long enough but willing to wait God's time—he often spoke about you, wondered why you did not write—he called all his Daughters a few nights Before his Death, I was laying Down—Brother Thomas and Captain Hathaway were a sitting By him—he called with a hollow voice, Molley, Bashy, Hannah and Deby and I started up and asked him what he wanted, he wanted nothing— I suppose he was thinking about us. Brother told him Molly was Dead and he knew that. O! sister, how plain I could see you in him when he was sick, his Mouth seemed to fall in and he looked more like you than any of us—how I long to see you—sometimes I think can it be I never shall see my sister any more in this world—according to my own age you Must be advanced and we Shurely Must Die—poor little Bradford lived one year and five Days after his Grandfather. Don't sister work too hard, let your childrea work. I have a great charge to take care of My Mother—we live by ourselves. My father told me there was a blessing for children that was kind to their parents and I Believe he thought I should obtain it. Your Mother has Been very ill this spring and summer, so weak she could not feed herself, but she has recruited very much, so that she walks about out Doors. It appears like a Miracle after being so low—But she cant remember one Moment to another. Brother Peres has built a new kitchen out at the end towards the well, which Brings the well and Milk house very handy, and the old chimney is taken Down and a new one put up and the old kitchen is Made a handsome parlor—the old stairs is taken away and we go up chamber out of the new kitchen to a bedroom where Brother Peres and wive slept—which Makes it a great way for My Mother and Me. Mother took the room which was the Most retired. My father Gives Mother one half of his Dwelling house During her Life and then to Peres. My father wrote his will himself some years ago and chose his three sons to settle his Estate. He thought he had not done justice by Me and he wrote a will himself and he gave Me More than he Did in his first will. I heard him tell Bradford he would say that for Daby she never is in Distress

about her portion You Cant think how it pleased me to think he had took notice of it, for my part I never could have thought of a will for it seemed as though Death was approaching. I sometimes think I would give all the world if I could see him again, then I think I Must go to him and shortly I should have wrote you long ago but had not power, but it is so ordered that time should soften grief. I have wrote sister Winslow, I hope you see her often and I hope you love one an other.

My father told us Children don't you quarrel and he told My brother the debts he had due him not to press upon nobody if they could not pay uot to distress them. he died at peace with all men and that he had hope of happiness and he hoped he should not lay asleep in the grave, But should go immediately to Happiness.

Wether they have settled with you or not I don't know—he give five pounds to you and five to Hannah and one hundred to Molley's children if there is any of them living, if not to be Equally divided between our Brothers. Our father said it was the fashion to Give the Boys Most, if he should Give his Daughters as he did his, and they Marry rich, why they would have more than their share—he made his will as he pleased, I am shure I knew not what was in it, nor I did not want to know. I heard him say many years ago "I always intended to have Given Daby Morse that her other sisters, But I Dont know how she will come out"—he had a will by him but it was wrote by Whitmore, where he was sick and he wrote last himself. I sent you a lock of your father's hair—he had but very little on his head, we was obliged to shave it off to put on Blisters to Draw out the pain.

I am yours,

DEBORAH GILBERT.

Lemuel Crane and wife.

(2d Letter of Deborah Gilbert.)

GRINOS, NOVEMBER 7, 1801.

DEAR BROTHER & SISTER :—

I have not forgot to write to you though I seldom hear from you—how Do you Do—Does old age crowd upon you? Sometimes I think I never shall see you again in this world. I want to hear from you and to no how you Do. I hear your children are all settled but one or two. I want to know how you fare in this troublesome world. Your Mother is yet alive, But almost gone. I have her to Dress and undress as a child and her memory fails very fast. She is lest Every Day and Dont know where she is 'till she goes out into the kitchen and into the Back room and searches round the house, Before she can be reconciled—and when she finds her home she is overjoyed and perhaps in one minute she is lost again and then has the same course to take.

Your Brother Tommy and wife was to see us Day before yesterday and Humphry is here now and they are all well, except Brother, he has the rheumatism.

Brother Peres is not very well, old age and hard work Dont agree—his wife and son is well. Bradford and family is well, they all join in love to you and the family.

I am your loving Sister,

Do write, DEBORAH GILBERT.

Lemuel Crane, favored by Mr. Winslow.

(Will of Col. Gilbert.)

In the name of God, Amen. I Thomas Gilbert of Gagetown, Province of New Brunswick, Esq. Being admonished of the certainty of Death, and of perfect mind and memory, Blessed by God, do ordain and Publish this to be my Last will and Testament in manner and form following (that is to say) First of all I Recomend my soul to almighty God who gave, in full hope Through the meditation of my Blessed Redeemer to receive full and Perfect Remission of all my sins.

2dly I Give my Body, to the Grave, to be Buried in a Christian and Decent, manner by my Executors hereafter named. And as to the worldly Estate which it hath pleased God to Bless me with I give and Bequeath and Dispose of in the following manner—(that is to say) First I Give and Bequeath to my Beloved wife Mary, one hundred and fifty pounds to be paid to her by my Executor out of the money's, which may be Due to me at the time of my decease. I also Give her the use and Improvement of one half part of the Dwelling house in which we now Dwell, for and During her natural Life. I also Give her my wearing apparell and one half part of all my Indoor and Household furniture, together with three cows. Twenty sheep and half the swine. This is over and above what she may be Pleased to take, as her Right of Dower, out of my Real or Landed Estate which by Law she is entitled to

Secondly—I Give and Bequeath to my Eldest son Thomas Gilbert of Burton in the county of Sunbury and Province aforesaid Esq., all that Island called Major's Island Laying in the River St. John

on which he now Dwells, together with four of the upper most of the nine lots which I Purchased of John Cutter Dight Esq. I also Give and Bequeath to my said son: all the Land and Buildings which I have Either by Grant or purchase, (only Excepting the Land and Buildings mortgaged to me by Robert Ray of Bigby)) which I have and Hold in the Province of Nova Scotia, he to have and Hold the same Lands, his heirs assigns forever.

Thirdly—I Give and Bequeath to my second son Peres Gilbert of Gagetown in Queens County afores'd, all the Island called Grimos island with all the lands on Grimos neck which I Purchased of Thomas Stoffield, with all the high or npland which I purchased of said Stoffield, the bounds of the said Lands, by his Deed will fully appear— I also Give and Bequeath to my said son Peres that Lot of Land which I Purchased of William Hazen Esq.—He to have and to Hold the said Lands with all the Buildings thereon Standing or lying Excepting the use and Improvement of one half part of the Dwelling house—The Improvement of which is for my aforesaid wife and after her Decease to my 2nd son Peres his heirs and assigns forever—I also Give my said son Peres all my farming utensils Scows Boats and so forth Together with one Yoke of Oxen and two cows and a half of all my swine.

Fourthly—I Give and Bequeath to my third son Bradford Gilbert of the City of St. John and Province aforesaid Esq., all the Land which I Purchased of Samuel Dickerson Esq., with all the Buildings thereon, and also the Lot adjoining, which I Purchased of John McAlpin, I also Give and Bequeath to my said son Bradford Five of ye Lowermost of the nine Lots of Land which I purchased of John Butler Dight Esq., which are laying and being in the township of Sheffield, and adjoining the four uppermost Lots which I have given my eldest son.

I Give and Bequeath to the heirs of my eldest daughter Molly Hathaway, Lately the wife of Thomas Hathaway, one Hundred pounds to be paid by my Executors out of any money which may be due to me. (Two or three lines follow which cannot be made out, but, probably referred to what should be done with the bequest in case the heirs of Mrs. Hathaway were dead.)

Sixthly—I Give and Bequeath to my second Daughter Bathsheba Five Pounds to be paid her by my Executors with what I have heretofore given my said Daughter as a full Proportion of my Estate.

Seventhly—I Give and Bequeath to my Third Daughter Hannah Winslow, wife of Ephraim Winslow, Five Pounds with what I have heretofore Given her as a full Proportion of my Estate.

Eighthly—I Give and Bequeath to my Fourth and youngest Daughter Deborah Gilbert a single maiden\*\* who has Engaged for many years past and hath suffered many hardships for the comfort and support of her parents and family, all the moneys—by Bond or Mortgage, of the Houses and Land which I have on the Estate of Robert Ray of Digby in the Province of Nova Scotia, my said Daughter to Have and Hold the same, her heirs and assigns forever. Further more I give my said Daughter Two Hundred pounds to be paid to her by my Exc'rs. I also Give my s'd Daughter one half part of all my Indoor Movables Equally to Divided with her mother. I Likewise Give my said Daughter Deborah the mare which is called her name, with all ye colts which are foaled of the same mare, which may not be Disposed of in my Lifetime—and also Give her, the mare and colt which I had of Capt. Miles, that together with two good cows and ten sheep, she my said Daughter to have and Receive, the above Bequests to herself and her heirs and assigns.

Ninthly and Lastly—as to all the Residue or Remainder of my Personal Estate Goods and Effects of what name and nature soever, Give to my said three sons—They to have to Hold the same Equally to be Divided Between them after Paying my Just Debts and funeral Charges, and the several sums heretofore given—and I Do hereby appoint my said three sons Thomas, Peres and Bradford Joint Executors to this my Last will and Testament Hereby Revoking all former wills by me made. In witness whereof have hereunto set my hand and seal the Twenty ninth Day of October in the Thirty-fifth year of his majesties Reign George ye Third of Great Britian France and Ireland and soforth—In the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninty five—Sign'd Seal'd Published and Delivered by the within named Thomas Gilbert, to be his last will and Testament in presence of us who have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses in the Testators Presence and in the presence of each other.

THOMAS GILBERT.

RICHARD CLARKE  
THOMAS HARTT  
SAMUEL R. CLARKE

Yesterday (Oct. 4, 1892) I received from Gen. Ebenezer Weaver Pierce, of Freetown, Mass.

\*\* She later married a Schofield, of Nova Scotia.

a member of this Society a letter—with it he also kindly sent views of the former home of Col. Gilbert in that place. Gen. Pierce says the house was built about 145 years ago. He further writes that his mother was born in the Gilbert house 106 years ago. I quote from the letter of Gen. Pierce—

“Much of the interior finish now, is what was there when occupied by Colonel Gilbert. I have the Spontoon that Gen. Thomas Gage sent to Col. Thomas Gilbert, early in 1775. It was taken from the tories by the whigs April 9, 1775. I have had the Spontoon about 55 years.

Respectfully etc.

E. W. PIERCE.”

The writer though a lineal descendent of Colonel Thomas Gilbert, has but little to offer in extenuation of his action during the struggle for American Independence. He has endeavored to faithfully give the facts connected with the career of this remarkable man. That Col. Gilbert was honest in his convictions of duty to his King, there is not the shadow of a doubt. The faithfulness with which he served England in the French war, and all his subsequent action until the separation of the colonies from the mother country, prove the truth of this assertion. A born leader, he moulded men to his will. The documents he left behind, show him to have been a man of superior education. In his family he was loved and respected to his dying hour. His descendents are numerous in the ancient Arcadia and memories of the Tory Chieftain yet live in the annals of New Scotland.

(A modern writer says of the family.)

“The name of Gilbert is eminent in the annals of the church, state and learning of England through several centuries. Its early home is in Devonshire—many branches planted in this country issued from this stock. The name is of Saxon origin, and means a bright or brave pledge. In 1060, Gilbert de Gaunt came in with William the Conqueror. In 1115 a Gilbert who joined the Crusaders was father of Thomas A. Becket. In 1215 one is treasurer of Lincoln Cathedral. In 1240, Archdeacon of Stow. In 1414 bishop of London. In 1475, an Otho Gilbert is high sheriff of Devonshire. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, that high-spirited and skillful mathematician and hydrographer, was born in 1539. His early youth was devoted to liberal studies, which with his brothers,—Sir John Sir Adrian and Sir Walter,—they pursued under one roof with the enthusiasm of great minds—they became valiant and well experienced in nautical affairs, and to the brothers Humphrey and Raleigh is ascribed the honor of laying the foundation of the trade and naval power of Great Britain. In 1570, Sir Humphrey proposed to Queen Elizabeth a plan for a university in the metropolis. Letters patent were granted him June 11, 1578, ‘to take possession of all remote and tortuous lands for himself and his heirs forever.’ His first voyage was unsuccessful, but five years later he discovers and lays claims to the Newfoundland fisheries, and while coasting along the country, his vessel—the “Squirrel,”? went down in a violent storm, September 9, 1583. He was last seen sitting in the storm with an open book in his hand, and his last words were, ‘We are as near heaven by sea as by land.’ His son, Raleigh Gilbert, of Compton Castle, had a son Humphrey, who, in 1620 was five years old.” This Humphrey is supposed to be the one who was settled in Ipswich, Mass., in 1648. The writer further says of him, “In 1650 he bought one hundred acres near the bounds of Wenham—his age, as shown by a deposition of his on file, agrees with Sir Humphrey’s grandson, and that the name Humphrey is in no other family of Gilberts either in England or this country. His will was made in

1657—58—By his wife, Elizabeth Kilham, daughter of Daniel Kilham, he had one son, John, and three daughters."

The descendants of this Humphrey settled in Gloucester, Marblehead, Brookfield and Littleton, Massachusetts. That this Humphry, son of Raleigh of Compton Castle, was closely related to John Gilbert first spoken of at the beginning of this sketch is plainly evident.

[THE END.]

#### GENEALOGY OF COL. GILBERT.

John [1] Gilbert, from Devonshire, Eng.; then Dorchester, Mass.; then Taunton.  
 Thomas [2] " of Taunton, married Jane Rossiter.  
 Thomas [3] " " " Anna Black.  
 Nathaniel [4] " " Berkley, born 1683.  
 Col. Thomas [5] " " " 1715.





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